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WORKING TOGETHER

COOPERATIVE FORESTRY — OUTREACH ACTION

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Department of
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Service

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SPECIAL EDITION



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Connecting People — Creating Success

Welcome to a special edition of Working Together. In these pages you will find success stories gathered from tribal and minority communities throughout the United States and Pacific Islands. We present these as examples of people who have come together, often against great odds, and succeeded in finding positive, creative solutions to some of the many challenges faced by today's communities. By using a collaborative approach, creating partnerships, and finding constructive ways to utilize all manner of resources, these people have learned to grow together while gaining respect and enthusiasm for differences, as well as similarities, among themselves. They have cultivated success by accepting challenges and taking risks while managing to overcome negativity and fear. With a commonsense attitude, determination, and lots of hard work, they are succeeding in creating a viable future for their communities and our world. We hope these stories will serve as inspiration and affirmation as you begin your own journey—working together!

We know there are many more stories waiting to be shared—people making good things happen, all over the map. The ones presented here are a few of the outstanding tribal and minority community-based programs and projects that have enlisted the talents and resources of the USDA Forest Service, State foresters, and many other partners. The Forest Service holds the philosophy that a forest ecosystem doesn't stop at the edge of a national forest. As stewards of major tracts of public land, we know it is essential to be good neighbors in communities, and with other landowners near our forests and grasslands. Through partnerships, we can assist in making local projects more successful, goals more attainable, and the forests and grasslands—both public and private—healthier, better places to live, work, and enjoy. As one person put it, "We want to change the focus from forestry-based communities to community-based forestry."

"Caring for the Land and Serving People" is the mission of the Forest Service. We are committed to strengthening and sustaining our Nation's environmental, economic, and social resources. We strive for excellence in land stewardship, research, and assistance to others. In this spirit, Cooperative Forestry programs and methods seek active ways to connect people to resources, ideas, and one another in order to better care for forests, and to sustain all types of communities. Partnerships are eagerly sought through four major areas: Economic Action, Landowner Assistance, Urban and Community Forestry, and Conservation Education. These exist to support the stewardship efforts.

However, success depends on individuals. Success happens on the grassroots level with people who have learned to collaborate and use all available resources. Thank you to the people who found the courage to begin their individual process toward success! You serve as models, inspire us to confidence, and demonstrate the meaning of Margaret Mead's words: "Never doubt that a small group of concerned people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

The Forest Service offers to you its skilled and experienced personnel, monetary resources, technical information, and networks of organizations. Contact us to begin a dialogue. We're here to help. By working together, we can succeed. Together, we find our way into a future created by living our dreams.



Bridge of Friendship

The Cherokee of North Carolina & Tennessee

The Eastern Band of the Cherokee is a group that is strongly aware of its roots. When gold was found on their land in the late 1800's, the Cherokee in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee were forced to abandon their land. Those who chose not to travel west, to a reservation, were ultimately given land inside the federally described "Qualla Boundary." Meanwhile, the Cherokee National Forest was created, and has grown up around these Cherokee lands. It seems fitting that these neighbors have found positive ways of working together.

The Forest Service, and other Federal and State partners, have provided both technical and financial assistance to the Cherokee. Hardwood silviculture, direction on preparing and administering timber sales, issuing permits for collection of special forest products for religious ceremonies, and economic development workshops are a few of the technical programs that the Cherokee National Forest's RCA effort has provided. Funds have been given through a series of grants, since 1994, for construction of a bridge to Cherokee Island Park, development of a long-range



Elizabeth Crane



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strategic vision plan (Vision 2000), construction of a trail to the heavily visited Mingo Falls, and reservation landscaping. "Except for Vision 2000, which has stopped and started several times, all these projects have been great successes," says Gerald Wicker, a Cooperative Forestry employee in the Southern Region. "And we're ready to jump back in with the plan when the tribe desires more assistance."

In addition to the activities specifically completed through grants, the Cherokee Tribal Planner, Susie Jones, has seen

improvements to the community through: involvement of "at-risk" youth; the "Battle of the Communities"—an annual event in which each of the seven Cherokee communities vies to see which has made the most progress over the year; the sometimes contentious process of preparing the vision plan; and events, such as the construction of the Island Bridge, where the entire reservation community pulls together to complete a project. "The Forest Service was helpful in so many ways," says Jones. "They facilitated meetings that would have been

difficult without them. The grant process is straightforward and understandable, and the technical assistance has been great." Jones says that anyone interested in getting help from the Forest Service should call as early in the process as possible. "Call and ask questions first [about your project and grants that may be available]. The Forest Service people will help you shape your request. A lot of the public don't realize the help is out there."

In addition to the Forest Service Rural Community Assistance (RCA) programs, the National Park Service's Job Corps, the North Carolina State Forest Service, Tennessee Division of Forestry, and the Southwestern Rural Community and Development office have been involved for more than 6 years in partnerships with the Cherokee. The Eastern Band of the Cherokee continue to work within their tribe and with their partners, finding positive solutions to mutual goals by building a bridge "of timber and of friendship" together.

For more information, contact:

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Beginnings

The Navajo of Arizona

San Francisco Peak rises above the desert landscape with its last winter snow scattered on its northern slopes. To the west, Gray Mountain spans to the edge of the Grand Canyon. Historically, the Navajo roamed and settled these lands and depended on its resources to sustain them. Today, most of this land is administered by the Forest Service.

As neighbors, the Forest Service and the Navajo living along the borders of Forest Service lands have had much to improve in their relationship. With the Kaibab National Forest's Vision 2000 and

the Coconino National Forest RCA program, communication is improving through coordinated technical assistance, shared technology, and cooperation on volunteer projects. Cameron is a gateway community to the Grand Canyon and to the Navajo Reservation that has enormous potential for development and growth. The Forest Service is assisting the community with its current and future challenges by providing technical support for a task force including Cameron Chapter officials, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Navajo Tribe Regional Business Development Center. The task force is working to create community infrastructure, including the development of a larger sewer lagoon,

and plans for future housing. Tourism, although undeveloped, could serve as a major source of income for the community. One-third of all visitors to the Grand Canyon—5 million annually—travel through Cameron. For many years, tribal governments were not eligible for many Federal or State rural development programs. Through recent laws, Navajo chapters, like Cameron, can receive assistance for community strategic planning, including tourism development. Cameron initiated the Diné Tourism Association, a nonprofit group of community members working to support a full-time specialist to oversee tourism development. In conjunction with the Grand Canyon Trust, the Forest Service, and the

Cameron Chapter, a Cultural Center, now exists to provide tourists with cultural education and entertainment.

One continuing effort involves solving the problem of livestock trespassing on the Kaibab National Forest boundary, near the town of Cameron. Tusaya Ranger District has shared information on operations, administration, and policies regarding Forest Service livestock allotments with local chapter officials and Navajo permittees. This "good neighbor" approach has its rewards. Navajo permittees, grateful for the time and effort of agency personnel who shared information and answered questions, are learning to work with the Forest Service. As a result, permittees, volunteers, and Forest Service

personnel joined forces on a project to repair fence lines and to return Navajo livestock to Navajo lands. This is an example of once-silent neighbors who are now willing to put time and energy into both projects and into building healthy, cooperative relationships.

Another issue that faced these two neighbors and demanded their attention was fuelwood availability and accessibility. Many homes in the Western Navajo Agency depend on wood for heating during winter, and for cooking

year round. Many turn to the fuelwood program on the national forests to meet their needs. The Tusayan and Peak Ranger Districts, Coconino National Forest, and the North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest, are a drive of more than an hour and a half for many to buy a permit. Tusayan Ranger District responded to the Cameron Chapter's request to allow the chapter to become a fuelwood vendor to provide personal fuelwood permits to its community and agency. Likewise, the Bodeway/Gap Chapter

works with the North Kaibab Ranger District as a vendor to provide fuelwood at Jacob Lake. Another problem wood permittees experienced was being required to pay an entrance fee to the Grand Canyon National Park as they traveled through the park in order to gather wood on Tusayan Ranger District. To resolve this problem, the National Park Service also cooperated and agreed to waive entrance fees to tribal members who have ancestral claim to the Grand Canyon. Due to successful problem

solving and technical assistance opportunities such as these, the Coconino National Forest saw a need to create a part-time position—a liaison between the neighbors—the tribes of the Western Navajo Agency and the Forest Service.



For more information, contact:

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A Focused Vision



Urban Forestry in Baltimore, Maryland

What are the key issues in urban forestry? Ask Bob Neville, recently retired Program Manager for the Forest Service's Urban Resource Partnership in Baltimore, and he'll tell you: "Water, air, shade, ecosystem diversity—all the things that a degraded forest can't manage. It's high density forestry to meet the needs of society." These issues necessitate a change in perception from urban forestry as arboriculture to integrated forest management in an urban environment. "No one was coming forward in Baltimore. Then I met a Yale forestry student, Morgan Grove, who was working on this issue. The Forest Service was looking at it from the view of natural systems and processes in an urban watershed, and Morgan was looking at the city systems and processes. To glue these two studies together, we needed a band of citizens with a vision, enthusiasm, and an understanding of what can be achieved." Enter the Parks and People Foundation.

The Parks and People Foundation was working with local groups through the Urban Resources Initiative (URI) and with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Forest Service (DNR), to reshape traditional approaches to environmental issues. In partnership with the USDA Forest Service, these groups created the Revitalizing Baltimore project in 1993. After careful consideration, the Gwynns Falls watershed, located in northwestern Baltimore, was picked as a model to study and a place to implement natural resource restoration. "One of the reasons," says Neville, "is because it starts in the highly urbanized Back Bay area and runs out to the rural fringe." Gren Whitman, Revitalizing Baltimore Project Manager, agrees, "One of the great things about Baltimore is that you can drive in almost any direction and be outside the city in 30 minutes. The urban and the suburban are connected by green ribbons."

Micro-forestry of parking lots, vacant lots, rundown parks, and waterways has to work within the existing city and State government. That is where a good local partner is invaluable. "Baltimore County and Baltimore City are interrelated on so many levels," says Neville.

Baltimore also has a very strong history of neighborhood identity. "We needed to mobilize the constituencies around a common theme, and they needed to be empowered," says Neville. One of the issues that came up, when merging the political system with the natural system, was the use of watershed boundaries to delineate projects. Did it create a problem when a neighborhood was part of several watersheds and possibly several watershed associations? "No," says Whitman, "In fact, there is so much pride in being involved with the Revitalizing Baltimore project, I think neighborhoods would brag about that."

Was there a time when the project could have failed? "Early on, Parks and People tried to get as broad a coalition as possible. At the first meeting, and for a long time thereafter, everyone had their own agenda and there was a fear that, somehow, if another group got what they wanted, there wouldn't be enough to go around. Finally, the vision got focused and people were willing to sacrifice for the whole. The feeling became, 'I see why that group needs the support right now. We can wait.'" But while the project team is working well now, Neville warns that the group leaders have to maintain the focus. "As new members come in, they can pull the project off into a new direction before anybody realizes it. Their energy is important. It can be a very touchy time."

Neville feels that the Forest Service has brought more than funding to the project, "Our technical assistance with large-view forest management is the obvious talent that we bring; but our involvement with State government, in particular the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Parks, was also key." Whitman agrees, "At first, I think the DNR was miffed at Forest Service involvement. But now there is an Urban Resource Coordinator in the department specifically looking at the urban forestry agenda. Other cities in Maryland will be positively affected by this DNR change. That is one of the most important things that has come out of this whole project."

"Another major point of this project is to help spell out how other cities can do this," says Gren Whitman. "How to coordinate the pieces to work toward a goal, or series of goals. But we've also seen incredible growth within the communities."

Community Forestry, a partnership of Parks and People and the City of Baltimore, created the "Tree Tribe" workshops to develop environmental leadership in neighborhoods. Early graduates of the workshops have become teachers of what they learned.

"This is the future of so much forestry," says Neville. "People look around and see where they live getting more and more urbanized. Their forests are being compromised by growth and development, and they haven't made a plan. Since there is no other agency or program in Federal Government looking at this, I feel the Forest Service's Urban Forestry Program is the only answer right now." Whitman adds, "Every program in Revitalizing Baltimore has been a success on some level. Instead of a 'Not in my backyard' attitude, the feeling is 'Please do it in my backyard.'"

For more information, contact:

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"Together, We Make our Dreams Reality"

Welcome to Our Town

Idabel, Oklahoma

The citizens of Idabel, Oklahoma, were tired of people driving through without stopping on their way to the extremely popular Beaver Bend Resort State Park, or places beyond. The townspeople felt the character of the town and its charm were worth a stop. "We didn't even have signs at the major roads into Idabel saying, 'Welcome to Idabel,'" said Patti Harris, of the Idabel Chamber of Commerce. With assistance from the Forest Service, Idabel has been able to develop a number of projects and leverage limited funds. A good example is the Job Development Incentive Program grant, which was awarded by the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to the Idabel Chamber. The Chamber shared the grant with three other local chambers of commerce located in McCurtain County.

Idabel, a community strongly dependent on forest products, has developed an action plan, received designation as an "Enterprise Community," and formed an aggressive Industrial Development Team. They have set a goal to plant 10,000 dogwoods in 10 years. "We want to be known as 'The Dogwood City,'" says Harris, and they initiated a festival around the dogwood bloom, called "Dogwood Days." The town has also been working with the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service, local businesses and industries, Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion branches, local civic clubs, schools, and citizens to accomplish many projects. Idabel has taken collaboration and volunteerism to heart!

"The local national forest ranger district has been very active in the Chamber of Commerce, and very civic minded," states Harris. "There have been too many people



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involved to mention just one or two." In addition to the direct value of the RCA grants Idabel has received, Harris feels the Forest Service involvement has been great for the credibility of the town's efforts. When asked what the key is to involving local Forest Service employees, Harris says, "Don't be afraid. Contact them. By all means. They're there to help." As far as continued participation from the Forest Service is concerned, Harris says, "I know we can count on them to help, whether it's planting trees or helping to develop an idea for a grant."

And the "Welcome to Idabel" signs? "They are installed, thanks to a national Forest Service 'Spirit Award' grant," says Harris. "We're proud of our town, we're a friendly town on the grow. Come visit us some time."

For more information, contact:

*Patti Harris,
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Far-Sighted Folks

Cook County, Illinois

More than eight decades ago, visionary citizens in Illinois set aside forested tracts of land in order to preserve them in their natural state. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County was formed in 1915 in the Greater Chicago metropolitan area to create sanctuaries for native communities of plants and animals. Because the area was already quite populated, natural fires were actively suppressed. This led to unnatural change in the native oak woodlands, tall grass prairie, and savanna ecosystems. As a result, nonnative species encroached into many plant communities.

In an effort to restore native habitat, large-scale landscape management planning necessitates involvement of both individual tracts of land and whole landscapes. Critical work has been done by more than 3,000 volunteers organized by The Nature Conservancy through their Volunteer



Ben Lenkart

Stewardship Network. Many of the volunteers have taken special interest in specific tract management and restoration issues, becoming "citizen scientists." In spite of the work of these dedicated volunteers, major partners were needed to tackle a large project. Enter the Forest Service's Urban Resources Partnership program. Funding from the program was provided to dedicate an initial area of research, provide cooperative planning for all of the district preserves, provide employment and environmental education for minority youth, and to help bring the partners together.

Success comes "when you have the full range of partners together and they have the commitment to work through the tough stuff," says John Dwyer of the Forest Service's North Central Forest Experiment Station. "And," he adds, "a good facilitator is the key to making this work." Dwyer goes on to say, "Urban forestry is a fundamental part of the future of the Forest Service. You must include the forests in urban settings. And not just as silviculture projects, but as living ecosystems." Partners in these Greater Chicago Metropolitan area projects include the Forest Preserve

District of Cook County, which manages 68,000 acres of open lands; The Nature Conservancy; the Eastern Region of the Forest Service; the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources—Division of Forest Resources.

These partners made their commitment to work through a comprehensive memorandum of understanding (MOU) that includes: Demonstration of the value of an ecological approach to stewardship of natural landscapes in a metropolitan area; support of the Forest Preserve District in implementing long-term, large-scale ecosystem management; development, implementation, and monitoring of site prescriptions; providing opportunities for people to participate in the process of natural landscape stewardship; and enhancing the working relationships among government agencies, conservation groups, and the public.

Sidelights of this confident and far-reaching MOU have been creation of an urban jobs program in ecological restoration work and a collective, comprehensive long-range plan for ecosystem manage-



Ben Lenkart

ment for all 68,000 acres of Cook County Forest Preserve lands.

Technical assistance from scientific divisions of the Federal Government has included soil testing by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; a review of the Volunteer Stewardship Network; and botanists and forest ecologists from the Forest Service to train, monitor, and evaluate the ecosystems as they evolve—and to monitor and evaluate the changing public perception of those same ecosystems.

The results so far? Oak woodlands, prairies, and other plant communities are being reestablished. Meanwhile, forestry on the urban fringe has brought out the curious, who have become active and hard-working naturalists. The concept of prescribed fire has been introduced to communities that might never have thought of such an idea. In the process, ecosystem science has come closer to urban communities and become somewhat demystified.



For more information, contact:

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Heritage Reborn

The Chippewa of Wisconsin

The search for a historic trading post of the fur-trade period within Wisconsin's Flambeau chain of lakes led to a creative archaeological partnership among the Lac du Flambeau Tribe of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, the Forest Service's RCA and Cultural Heritage programs, the State Historical Society, and local historians.

Although the location of the fur-trading station was not found, the Chippewa Tribe benefited through collection of background information, and the uncovering of six new archaeological sites. Lac du Flambeau tribal members, tribal employees, Bureau of Indian Affairs staff, and youth working in local summer programs were enlisted to conduct thorough, and painstaking, archaeological investigations in a 9-square-mile area, within the 144 square miles of the Lac du Flambeau Chain of Lakes. The George W. Brown, Jr., Ojibwe Museum and Cultural Center staff was instructed in historic literature search techniques that led to the compilation of more than 125 references to fur traders and their activities.

Cynthia Stiles, a Forest Service archaeologist for the Nicolet and Chequamegon National Forests, says, "The project falls primarily within

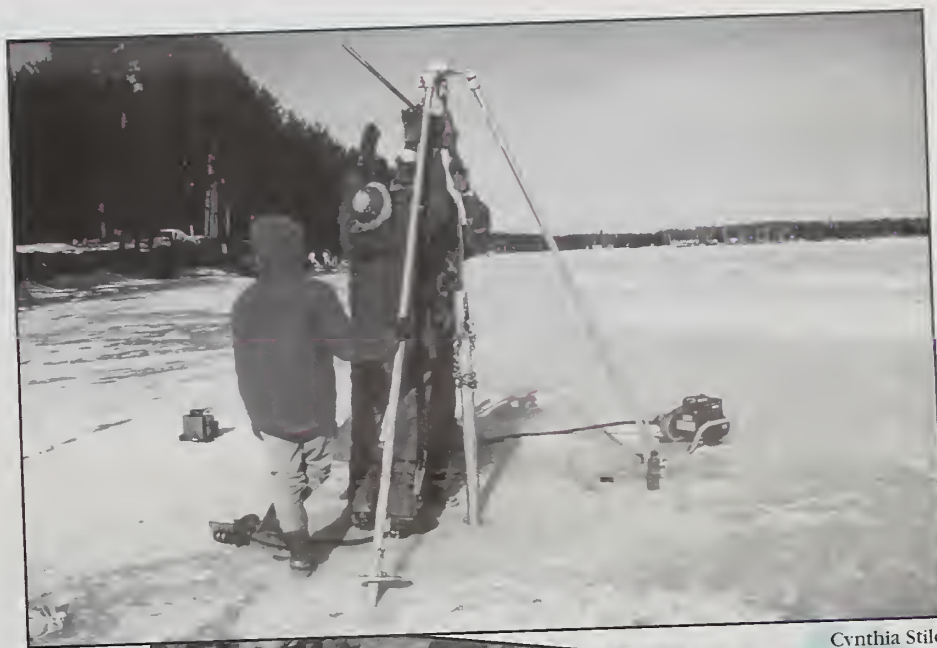
counties between the two national forests. By working with the Lac du Flambeau Tribe, we can begin to describe broad-based patterns in the North Woods." She adds that time is running short, "Development and shifting lake levels have significantly changed the look of these lake shores. It's possible that many remains lay under multiple layers of development. If we're to find the cultural artifacts that remain, we need to hurry."

Stiles says that tribal participation was great. "At first, younger members joked and teased about the rigorous process of searching the grid. But once we started to find pottery and tools, the excitement was infectious. I think that this has been a great experience for the tribal members who have been involved, and it's added tremendously to the George W. Brown, Jr., Ojibwe Museum and Cultural Center. Combining the Federal, State, and tribal objectives has made it possible to continue this important project."

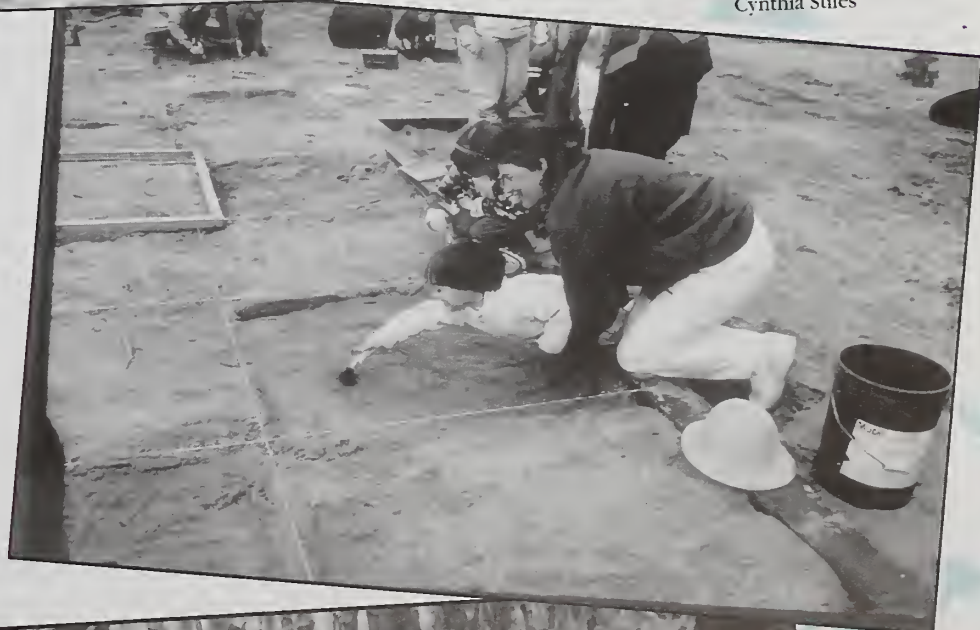
For more information, contact:

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Patricia Hrabik Sebbby,
Tribal Historic Preservation
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Band of the Lake Superior
Chippewa Indians,
(715) 588-3303



Cynthia Stiles



Cynthia Stiles



**"Caring for the land
and serving people"**

Plant Trees, Grow Pride

The Native American Communities of New Mexico

"The real difference in lasting cultural change comes from the people—grassroots up, not Government programs or mandates," says Suzanne Probart, Executive Director of Tree New Mexico, Inc. (TNM). TNM has made a slight shift from grassroots to tree roots—bare root seedlings and containerized trees. Specifically, TNM has aided Native American communities in New Mexico in the planting of tens of thousands of trees on 20 pueblos throughout the State. Programs include the development of an annual Navajo Nation Arbor Day, restoration at Acomita Lake on the Acoma Pueblo, and numerous training sessions on planting, arboriculture, and ecosystem maintenance and restoration.

It is said that the acorn doesn't fall far from the oak. In New Mexico, you might say the children don't wander far from their trees: the students at Taos Pueblo were given seedlings to pot up, care for, and then plant outdoors. At the Acomita Lake reforestation site, 285 students potted or planted more than 650 trees in 1995 alone, and young members of the Isleta Pueblo, located south of Albuquerque, could be seen carrying water buckets to their seedlings until drip irrigation was installed. All told, TNM has aided Native Americans in planting more than 100,000 trees in New Mexico since 1991.

These days, such a massive undertaking requires more than the will of one Johnny Appleseed. It requires dedication and numerous partners, each with a commitment to see the programs succeed.

Tree New Mexico has partnered with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the New Mexico State Forestry, the National Tree Trust, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and of course, the people of each participating pueblo in New Mexico. Navajo Nation Arbor Day? It's April 24th.

For more information, contact:

Suzanne Probart, Executive Director,
Tree New Mexico, (505) 265-4554

George Dudah, Urban Forestry Coordinator,
New Mexico State Forestry,
(505) 827-8093

Main Street Revitalization

Columbia, Louisiana

One of the most unique communities in north-east Louisiana, the Town of Columbia, is enjoying a rebirth of its historical Main Street District through the partnerships created under the Forest Service's RCA efforts. The Kisatchie National Forest provided technical assistance in the form of a loaned landscape architect for conceptual design in the restoration of the Schepis Building. This assistance, along with a Forest Service grant and another from the Louisiana Historic Preservation Office, made the difference for the transformation of a rundown, neglected Historic Register site into the Schepis museum and community center. The building became the core of a Main Street revitalization effort to restore the 1830's era steamboat community and feature one of the few examples of Italian immigration into Louisiana.

In addition to creating a town centerpiece, the broad range of involvement of groups and individuals in the Town of Columbia has been so successful in collaborative efforts that the community won a Forest Service "Spirit Award," which brought in an additional \$5,000 for the building restoration. Restoration of the building was not only a matter of civic pride, but is also a much-needed addition to the arts community in an otherwise completely rural environment.

In addition to dinner theatre productions and arts workshops, the museum has stimulated all members of the community to get involved in creating exhibits that highlight local history and resources.

Alan Dorian, Heritage Resources Coordinator on the Kisatchie National Forest, states, "In 1993, Main Street looked dead and gone. Forest Service funds came in about the same time as the Louisiana Historic Preservation Office funds, but I think that other agencies realized there was viability once the Forest Service showed interest." It isn't just a matter of calling up the Forest Service. According to Dorian, "You need to have a plan, and you need to have done some homework. A community should not rely on the Forest Service as their sole partner." In addition to the Forest Service and the State of Louisiana, other partners working with the "Friends of the Schepis" and the Town of Columbia to restore their historic community include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Ouachita River Foundation, and many local banks and businesses.

For more information, contact:

Alan Dorian, Heritage Resources Coordinator,
Kisatchie National Forest, (318) 473-7160

GAP—"Gang Alternative Partnership"

Sparks, Nevada

In Sparks, Nevada, and neighboring Reno, there is an organization that wants to fill the gap for kids at risk of involvement with gangs. In fact, they are the GAP—the Gang Alternative Partnership—a partnership of the Fourth Street Community Center, local businesses, and the Tonopah Ranger District of the Toiyabe National Forest. GAP takes kids of all nationalities, aged 14–18, and brings them by horseback into the wilderness for 4 days. The Forest Service provides use of their horses and some staff support, GAP provides staff counselors, and the community provides local housing and food.

The summer of 1997 marked the first year of the program, with GAP focusing on "peer leadership" within the target population, which is "mostly lower income, and mostly Hispanic, immigrant

children," according to Tonopah District Ranger Tony Valdes. "That is the primary makeup of the at-risk community for this program. The kids are not just from Mexico, but from all over Central and South America. That is an interesting dynamic all by itself." GAP intends to reach out to more youth and expects the kids that have graduated from the program to communicate what they have learned to their peers.

The 4-day camp begins with a potluck dinner and slide-show with district employees and GAP counselors. The kids see what to expect over the next 3 days of camping and horseback riding, meet the horses, and learn about basic horse care. The following morning, the teenagers learn how to saddle and ride a horse. "This is pretty interesting to see," says Valdes. "Some of these kids have never been out of a city, let alone been on horseback.

There is definitely fear of the horses at first. But, by day four, they curry, bridle, and saddle the horses by themselves." In addition to building confidence, Valdes says there is something else: "They learn to ask for help and to help each other."

"We're just trying to implement Title 6 [of the Civil Rights Act]," says Valdes. "To reach out to nontraditional publics of the Forest Service, to provide leadership and environmental awareness, and to communicate our mission and vision."

For more information, contact:

Tony Valdes, District Ranger, Tonopah Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, (702) 482-6286



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In addition to creating a town centerpiece, the broad range of involvement of groups and individuals in the Town of Columbia has been so successful in collaborative efforts that the community won a Forest Service "Spirit Award," which brought in an additional \$5,000 for the building restoration. Restoration of the building was not only a matter of civic pride, but is also a much-needed addition to the arts community in an otherwise completely rural environment.

In addition to dinner theatre productions and arts workshops, the museum has stimulated all members of the community to get involved in creating exhibits that highlight local history and resources.

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Alan Dorian, Heritage Resources Coordinator,
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GAP—"Gang Alternative Partnership"

Sparks, Nevada

In Sparks, Nevada, and neighboring Reno, there is an organization that wants to fill the gap for kids at risk of involvement with gangs. In fact, they are the GAP—the Gang Alternative Partnership—a partnership of the Fourth Street Community Center, local businesses, and the Tonopah Ranger District of the Toiyabe National Forest. GAP takes kids of all nationalities, aged 14-18, and brings them by horseback into the wilderness for 4 days. The Forest Service provides use of their horses and some staff support, GAP provides staff counselors, and the community provides local housing and food.

The summer of 1997 marked the first year of the program, with GAP focusing on "peer leadership" within the target population, which is "mostly lower income, and mostly Hispanic, immigrant

children," according to Tonopah District Ranger Tony Valdes. "That is the primary makeup of the at-risk community for this program. The kids are not just from Mexico, but from all over Central and South America. That is an interesting dynamic all by itself." GAP intends to reach out to more youth and expects the kids that have graduated from the program to communicate what they have learned to their peers.

The 4-day camp begins with a potluck dinner and slide-show with district employees and GAP counselors. The kids see what to expect over the next 3 days of camping and horseback riding, meet the horses, and learn about basic horse care. The following morning, the teenagers learn how to saddle and ride a horse. "This is pretty interesting to see," says Valdes. "Some of these kids have never been out of a city, let alone been on horseback.

There is definitely fear of the horses at first. But, by day four, they curry, bridle, and saddle the horses by themselves." In addition to building confidence, Valdes says there is something else: "They learn to ask for help and to help each other."

"We're just trying to implement Title 6 [of the Civil Rights Act]," says Valdes. "To reach out to nontraditional publics of the Forest Service, to provide leadership and environmental awareness, and to communicate our mission and vision."

For more information, contact:

Tony Valdes, District Ranger, Tonopah Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, (702) 482-6286

Water, Habitat & Health

Gallinas River Watershed, New Mexico

The Upper Gallinas River watershed encompasses 84 square miles in New Mexico. The Gallinas River is an important, cold-water fishery. It provides water for 8,100 acres of irrigated land for the Las Vegas National Wildlife Refuge, and the community of Las Vegas, Nevada—a municipality of 17,000 that is growing by 4 percent annually.

To improve the health of the Gallinas watershed, while increasing the quality and availability of water, \$80,000 of Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) funds were targeted in this region. Much of the upper watershed is a dense forest that is losing tree vigor and becoming susceptible to forest insects. Unless properly managed, the crowded, dead, and infected trees increase the potential for catastrophic fires to occur—fires that could damage and destroy many resources, including the water supply. To avoid such a disaster, the SIP funds helped landowners thin 500 acres of unhealthy forest.

Historical practices in the riparian areas created a lack of vegetative diversity, caused bank undercutting, and created a wide, shallow streambed. These stream conditions escalated erosion, increased sediment loads, and diminished water quality. The SIP

initiative helped reduce turbidity through implementation of specific forest management practices on private lands within the watershed. Plantings and vegetative buffers are being established on 140 riparian acres. Approximately 75,000 feet of fence is also being installed to protect the plantings from animal damage. The watershed, and the community it serves, will both see long-term benefits.

For more information, contact:

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(505) 588-7831

Larry Roybal, Southwest Region Landowner Assistance Coordinator, Albuquerque, NM,
(505) 842-3425, 3421/3422

Success Stories Happening All Over The Map!

The Yomba Shoshone of Nevada

What started out as a tribal liaison position for the district ranger on the 1.4-million-acre Tonopah Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, has become a passion. "I've gotten very involved," Tony Valdes states, modestly. Due to Valdes' hard work, and two RCA grants, the Yomba Shoshone ("ShuSHOWN") Reservation in the Reese River Valley, is putting out a better welcome mat for the world. Through a Forest Service participating partnership agreement, a vacant Forest Service Guard Station on Yomba Reservation land will be utilized in a number of new ways. The garage will shelter the local Emergency Medical System ambulance and several tribal fire trucks. A three-bedroom house will be used by the caretaker of the facilities, and the main station may be converted into a visitor center for the Forest Service and the tribe. The first grant was used to run a "culinary water line," from the reservation to the guard station, making the buildings habitable.

"It's pretty remote out here," says Valdes. "It's about a 2-hour drive to Tonopah, the closest town; much of it on a dirt road. There are about 500 people in the whole Reese River Valley. Kids ride a bus 85 miles each way to school." Valdes thought that a better road system might lead to more visitors. More visitors could lead to recognition of the excellent Yomba Shoshone artists. The Forest

Service took the lead in getting the Reese River Valley road designated as a Federal highway, thereby making it eligible for Federal highway funds. Nye County is a partner in this because they will be responsible for the road maintenance. One goal is for the State to include the newly paved road in its Scenic Byways system. In addition to the hoped-for influx of tourists, the new road will make response time shorter for emergency vehicles.

The second grant was for Yomba cultural development projects: the Yomba artists are painting murals on bare cinder block walls; and two 25-foot-high totems are available for tribal ceremonies—and the annual Yomba Days Celebration, which is held the third weekend in August. Valdes hopes the Department of Labor Senior Community Service Employment Program, in which the Forest Service is a participating agency, will continue to be offered. "The Yomba has a number of older citizens. We'd like to see them operating the joint Forest Service-Yomba Visitor Center." Valdes observes that people and organizations with common goals sometimes don't see eye-to-eye. "That is where a good facilitator comes in. There are losses of resources and opportunity because people don't realize the need to come together. It's a great opportunity to help save those resources."

For more information, contact:

Tony Valdes, Tonopah District Ranger, Toiyabe National Forest, (702) 482-6286

Land Stewardship in the West

The Indian Canyon Nation, California

A plan that captures the very spirit of land stewardship is a goal of the Indian Canyon Nation, the first group of Native Americans to work toward a stewardship plan in California. The Indian Canyon Nation's land is located 17 miles south of Hollister, California, with property consisting of two parcels covering over 300 acres. It is part of the ancestral home of the Costanoan Ohlone people.

The plan is to develop conservation and cultural uses of the land and provide a living Indian Heritage Area in the canyon. According to Jim Geiger, California Department of Forestry's Stewardship

Coordinator, "It is a project that will both contribute to the Native American culture and allow citizens to glimpse part of this Nation's rich heritage." Sherman Finch, a registered professional forester, prepared the plan's first draft. Tribal Chairperson, Ann Marie Sayers, expressed appreciation for the Stewardship Incentive Program's versatility in allowing cultural aspects to be incorporated with more traditional forestry practices.

Emphasis at the site will be on wildlife habitat, erosion control, and water resources. Prescribed fire will be used to reduce wildfire hazards, and prepare for the introduction of plants with ceremonial

value, around a proposed Living Indian Heritage Area. The special plantings will include willow, rushes, elderberries, and sage.

For more information, contact:

Sandy Stone, Forest Stewardship Coordinator,
Pacific Southwest Region, (415) 705-2587

Woodland Stewards

Idaho & Washington

Forest health is a major concern to landowners in the inland Pacific Northwest. Drought, insects, disease, and fire have taken a widespread toll. In response, the States of Idaho and Washington have teamed up to form the Woodland Stewards In Partnership Project, which is a model of how public-private partnerships, combined with neighbor cooperation, can address forest health issues across ownership and political boundaries. This project focused \$160,000 in Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) funds to improve forest health conditions on nonindustrial private forest lands in two adjoining watersheds—Thompson and Hauser

Creeks—north of Spokane, Washington, and Couer d'Alene, Idaho.

The grassroots project began with “watershed neighbor” meetings where forest owners collaborated to identify resource problems and enhancement practices that could be addressed by SIP. In addition to gaining eligibility for SIP funds, participating landowners received on-site advice from public and private natural resource professionals. The Cooperative Extension System conducted education programs, including forest stewardship planning classes for project participants. An added highlight was a regional landowners’ field day, featuring participation by the State forester and members of a congressional delegation.

For more information, contact:

Kirk David, *Service Forestry Coordinator, Idaho Dept. of Lands*, (208) 769-1525

Steve Gibbs, *Washington Dept. of Natural Resources—Forest Service*, (360) 902-1706

“The Camp”

Urban Indian Youth in Colorado

It happens every summer—the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), Eagle Lodge, Inc., the Forest Service, and the Denver Urban Resources Partnership (DURP) collaborate to provide 60 to 70 Denver metropolitan area youth with an exciting and educational week at the AISES camp.

The AISES Environmental Institute, or “The Camp,” as it is lovingly referred to, is located in Shawnee, Colorado, on the South Platte Ranger District of the Pike National Forest. The beautiful mountains and first-class facilities provide an ideal setting. The American Indian and Forest Service faculty expose urban children to ecological philosophies from traditional perspectives, as well as from the classical sciences. Young American Indians take part in many different activities designed to promote a sense of self and of values based on their American Indian culture and heritage.

For instance, students learn about “star knowledge” from traditional elders. Star knowledge sessions join modern astronomy with the power of traditional beliefs regarding creation and the natural forces of the universe. Through storytelling by elders, the kids learn cultural standards, and their group identity in the world is reinforced. Several activities get the youngsters involved with native practitioners in hands-on projects that include traditional agriculture. An important element in the week-long program is indigenous gardening, which matches indigenous vegetation to local environmental capabilities. Careful study of

the relationships helps to develop the emotional attachment to the land that has been passed down from generation to generation within indigenous nations.

This opportunity for urban American Indian youth to connect with their culture and natural environment is a collaborative effort among many agencies and groups committed to providing natural resource leadership: Rocky Mountain Region (Region 2) State and Private Forestry Program (USDA-FS); the Colorado Division of Wildlife; Region 2 Renewable Resources Unit (USDA-FS); Eagle Lodge, Inc.; DURP; supportive parents; and AISES. As a national, nonprofit organization, AISES works to strengthen the science skill of American Indian students as early as elementary school.

The ultimate goal of the organization is “to be a catalyst for the advancement of American Indians as they seek to become self-reliant and self-determined.” With more than \$500,000 awarded in scholarships in 1997, it’s clear that they are well on their way.

For more information, contact:

Susan Johnson, *Biologist & American Indian Program Manager, Rocky Mountain Region, Golden, CO*, (303) 275-5065

Linda Moyer, *Camp Coordinator, Eagle Lodge, Denver, CO*, (303) 331-9415

Susan suggests, “I don’t think it’s a loss of faith. I think it’s frustration. People look around and see success in other programs and they feel like they could be doing so much more if they just had a few more resources.” She goes on to say, “Of course, you do need good people—people who are committed to the project. The Forest Service is a partner, not a pusher. We’re not here to do everything for community groups, but we are here to help.” The list includes environmental education, trails and wetlands projects, community gardens, and urban forestry projects.

For more information, contact:

Susan Ford, *Branch Chief Urban Forestry, Rocky Mountain Region, Golden, CO*, (303) 275-5742

Linda Moyer, *Camp Coordinator, Eagle Lodge, Denver, CO*, (303) 331-9415

DURP

Denver Urban Resource Partnerships, Colorado

Susan Ford, USDA Rocky Mountain Region Coordinator for Urban Resource Partnerships, points to the 90-plus projects being funded by DURP and the 800 communities with some form of community action in the region, and says, “If you rated each community from no action to fully realized project, we’d run the scale. Good programs take time.” Anyone who has worked long and hard on a community project will testify that there are times when your faith is tested and all seems lost.



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Kachinas and Santos

Alamosa, Colorado

Kachinas and Santos are religious statues, carved from special wood, and are symbols of Native American and Hispanic cultures, respectively. In the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado, as in many of the Western States, the cultures are often neighbors. The Forest Service’s RCA effort in the San Luis Valley and Adobe de Oro Concillio de

Artes (AOCA) agreed that a conference of artisans and religious leaders, from both cultures, could help keep these woodcarving traditions alive. Perhaps it might also lead to an increased mutual understanding of the differences and grounds for collaboration between the two groups.

The conference, which included funding from the Forest Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, and AOCA, included sunrise services, blessings, and spiritual gatherings that celebrated each culture’s beliefs. Artists from the local area and several surrounding States shared their techniques and style with participants and conference attendees. “AOCA was worried that a loss of cultural appreciation was happening. They hoped to bring kids into the process; to bridge the cultural gaps through art. The kids loved it,” said San Juan–Rio Grande National Forests’ RCA coordinator, Connie Knapp.

The Forest Service participated in a panel discussion that focused on ecological issues and methods for collecting raw materials that preserve the basic natural resource. In the process, the San Juan–Rio Grande National Forests realized that better guidelines were needed within the National Forest System to regulate how material is gathered for this specific use. They are now working on developing new permit rules.

Island of Success

Forest Stewardship Program in American Samoa

The Forest Stewardship Program in American Samoa has done more than provide cocoa, coconut, and pomult seedlings to local farmers. Through the use of mandatory management plans that each farmer is required to file before receiving his first batch of seedlings, the program is able to communicate pest and plant disease information through land-grant university entomologists and pathologists. The farmers are given help with planting and maintenance techniques. Ever-present new roads and driveway cuts—a major source of nonpoint pollution on the island—have slowly been stabilized with new vegetation.

By matching the availability of additional seedlings with the farmer’s performance in tending those that he has already received, State extension workers are able to keep the growers involved in the process. Those farmers who show care in maintaining their young crop are able to get more

“Among the artists, there was an agreement reached to continue communicating about techniques. There will definitely be a transfer of technology,” said Knapp. “Within the greater community, there is increased awareness of the need to work together and find peaceful solutions to problems.” “We saw several connections between the art forms,” says Ozella Martinez of AOCA, “and one of the real connections was the forest.”

The second part of the project is an exhibit of the two forms of artwork, that travels within the San Luis Valley to Forest Service offices and area museums. Knapp says, “This project was selected during our prescreening because the group was so together, and because the local arts council representatives convinced us that the project represented the ideas of the entire valley.”

Says Martinez, “The RCA people were great to work with. They gave us room to run the project and were enthusiastic in communicating their technical ideas about collecting materials. If you have a project that touches the soul of your community, and involves the forest, call the Forest Service RCA coordinator. It would make me happy if this project inspires others to contact them.”

For more information, contact:

Paul Peck, *RCA Coordinator, Mancoos Defore Ranger District, San Juan National Forest, (970) 247-4874*

Linda Davis, *RCA Coordinator, Pike San Isabel National Forests, (719) 545-3744*

seedlings for free, or to purchase fruit tree grafts at a low cost. The monitoring visits occur at least every 2 months and upon each new distribution of seedlings.

The success of the Forest Stewardship Program has put the program manager in a strong position to ask other agencies in American Samoa to participate on a formal advisory committee. With the help of committee members, the program manager hopes to broaden the scope of the planting program to include nitrogen-fixing hedgerow plantings, conservation of private forest lands, channeling of funds for restoration of riparian zones, and identification of wildlife habitat.

If the program continues to succeed at this rate, who knows? Maybe pomult post fences will become as familiar as chocolate coconut clusters.

For more information, contact:

Sandy Stone, *Forest Stewardship Coordinator, Pacific Southwest Region, (415) 705-2587*

Totems & Dance

The Tlingit of Klawock, Alaska

On Prince Edward Island, in southeast Alaska, a symbol of power and promise has been raised. It stands among the ancient trees from which it was carved, reigning over the village of Klawock. It is the new Raven-Finned Blackfish totem pole—the first addition to Klawock's totem park in 50 years.

The village of about 730 people ("Depending on the season," says town manager Carl "Doc" Waterman) has one of the best collections of totem poles in southeast Alaska. The park is a "definite draw for the smaller, discovery-type tour boats," says Waterman. But, in this temperate rainforest climate, many of the poles were in a state of decay. It is difficult for the town to take on new projects. "We've got a city hall staff of four people, and major issues, like improving the infrastructure, to

tackle," Doc admits. The community is mostly Tlingit and many people know the totems are important in the present, as well as to their past. Finding the resources and administrative help to maintain and improve the park proved elusive.

The new pole was crafted through a creative partnership involving the town, Klawock Heenya Corporation, the public school district, and a local totem carver—who together provided the impetus and the art. The Forest Service provided rural development grant funding and assistance with "getting through the mountains of paperwork that often come with State and Federal grants," as Doc says.

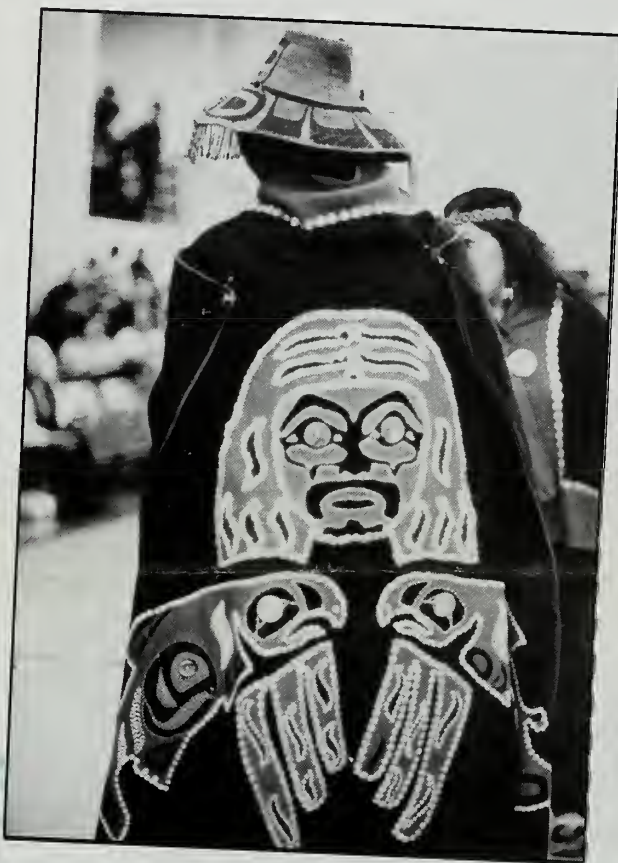
The raising of the totem pole has awakened a strong cultural pride. It has demonstrated the feasibility of reviving and preserving ancient customs and tradition. With an additional grant from the Forest Service and funding from the State of Alaska and the Shaan Seet Corporation,

Klawock is completing a traditional longhouse as the first phase of a Community Heritage Center.

Back at the totem park, four aging poles are being restored and a new carving shed is being built. Now Doc is talking about future plans: "We also want to build facilities for a traditional salmon bake, and we'd like to build a museum. There are a lot of examples of Tlingit crafts out there that could be in a village museum." For now, visitors can get a good taste of what life is like in Klawock during the town's annual Culture Fair. It is run by the Klawock Native Culture Committee. When you come, bring a pole of your own. As Doc says, "The fishing is great!"

For more information, contact:

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Tongass National Forest-Stikine Area,
(907) 772-3841



FS Photos

Mushrooms from Trees

The Shiitake Mushroom Growers of Alabama

Nine individuals, over half of whom are retired, with limited personal income, are benefiting from the Shiitake Mushroom Project funded for rural "Black Belt" counties in Alabama. A small (\$2,800) RCA grant assisted over a dozen growers in Macon, Bullock, and Butler counties.

Using a total of 10,000 hardwood logs, over 15,000 pounds of mushrooms are produced annually, resulting in a combined income of \$97,000 (based on the 1997 negotiated price of \$6.50/lb). By continuing to seek out and train new growers, and achieving the production goal of 5,000 pounds per week, this coopera-

tive is able to sell to the Asian market in California. An individual grower could never expect to compete in the national shiitake marketplace. This cooperative effort exemplifies the benefits of cooperatives in increased spending power in black, rural Alabama. With only a little "seed money," effective market analysis, and a great amount of teamwork and personal commitment, this mushroom project is well on its way.

For more information, contact:

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National Forests of Alabama,
(334) 832-4470

Alan Pigg, RCA Coordinator,
Southern Region, (404) 347-7486



Elizabeth Crane

Sierra Success

Carson City, Nevada

The High Sierra Resources Workshop doesn't try to give its students the right answers. It tries to get them to ask the right questions. The students, who apply for the program through their high school science programs, come from throughout Nevada. Many have never camped, spent time away from urban areas, or been in the wilderness. "One of our focuses has been to reach 'at-risk' youth," says Steve Hale, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist at the Carson Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest. "Kids from

minority neighborhoods, Native American kids, and foster home youth are some of our biggest success stories." The students are often profoundly affected by the experience. Their stories have made envious peers ask when the next workshop will happen.

Each session, with about 13 students (limited by wilderness group-size restrictions), is led by a team of facilitators through the Carson River watershed, into the 159,000 acre Carson-Iceberg Wilderness, for 8 days of

camping and outdoor activities. The students get hands-on experience—reinforcing and expanding on what they have learned in classrooms—while gaining an understanding of natural resource management issues. The workshop offers a unique opportunity in Nevada because the State doesn't have a formal environmental education program.

Partners in the High Sierra Resources Workshop program include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Carson City School District, the Nevada Division

of Forestry, and Toiyabe National Forest. A hefty portion of the load is literally carried on the backs of horses and mules belonging to the Nevada Back Country Horsemen. The horsemen have also donated funds, provisions, and countless volunteer hours in addition to the loan of their prized palominos. According to Hale, "All of the Federal funds are used 'on-the-ground,' but we couldn't do it without the Back Country Horsemen."



For more information, contact:

Steve Hale, Natural Resource Specialist, Carson Ranger District, Toiyabe National Forest, (702) 882-2766

Pat Murphy, Nevada Division of Forestry, (702) 684-2500

Music from Wood

The Marimba Band of Grovetown, Texas

The Grovetown, Texas, marimba band is making music with a "value-added" wood product. The Chaia marimba was originally created in Zimbabwe, Africa, from the native muquah wood. Prototypes of replica marimbas are now being manufactured in this community in Trinity County.

The Forest Products Laboratory of the Texas Forest Service compared the physical properties of local, native tree species to African muquah wood. They found that southern yellow pine had the best match to the African species. For a source of raw materials, they didn't have to go far.

The short end pieces of southern yellow pine, from local sawmills, are being used to create marimbas with tones similar to the original. The Chaia marimba production has created three jobs for local women and has turned a former waste product into a thing of beauty.

For more information, contact:

DeWayne Weldon, (409) 639-8180

Elizabeth Crane, Outreach Coordinator, Southern Region, (404) 347-3364



Elizabeth Crane

Community Spirit

The People of Beloit, Alabama

The Beloit Community Organization has worked closely with towns in a three-county area to develop newspaper recycling and other projects that support the town's Community Center and its activities. The center is housed in the historic Beloit School, which was founded more than 100 years ago through a partnership with Beloit College, Wisconsin. Dr. Charles Curtis originally purchased the land at the turn of the century, but he sold it to African Americans in 1922 so they could make their dream of a school become a reality. During the racial strife and social unrest in the 1960's, the school was taken from the community.

The organization, which was founded in 1970, has been able to buy back the school and has a new dream of restoring the building to its original beauty. The Beloit Community Organization is determined to develop and implement local programs to raise money and maintain community pride and

enthusiasm. Organization vice-president, Clarence Mauldin, says, "It's hard work, but we've got the spirit that we can't lose."

RCA grants and technical assistance through the Forest Products Conservation and Recycling (FPC&R) program have helped the Beloit Community Organization to implement plans and exceed their recycling goals. From a target of 20 tons of recycled materials per month, the group is now recycling in excess of 30 tons. A part-time coordinator has been hired to organize the numerous volunteers who collect and sort the materials.

The collection and sorting activities are so popular, they have become a social gathering time. The center also serves other parts of the community by providing meals for the elderly and a place to work on quilts and other local crafts, which are sold at craft fairs.

"It's a good project and a lasting project," says Mauldin. When asked what a group should know before start-

ing something like this, Mauldin jokes, "Well, they aren't going to find much around here. We've pretty much got everything." He goes on to add that, "If you've got hard working people that stay with the project, it will work."

For more information, contact:

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Elizabeth Crane

Pines and People:

Making a Difference Louisiana

Since 1994, employees of the Kisatchie National Forest have been working with the State-recognized Clifton-Choctaw Tribe and the Louisiana Office of Forestry to develop a much-needed source for longleaf pine

seedlings. The current extent of stands of this highly desirable southern pine is about 10 percent of its original territory. With the development of a nursery and the necessary procedures for producing "container-

ized" seedlings, the Clifton-Choctaw Tribe has been helping the Forest Service and the State of Louisiana restore the nearly decimated longleaf pine habitat.

In addition to funds granted to the tribe under the

Economic Recovery program, the Forest Service has loaned a silviculturist from the Southern Research Station. After less than 2 years of dedicated work, the Clifton-Choctaw were able to deliver more than 75,000 longleaf pine seedlings in 1996, and the business, as well as the trees, just keeps on growing. This activity has led to full-time jobs for three members of the tribe.

While three jobs may not sound like much in some communities, for this small tribe the ability to develop full-time, year-round jobs, which allow tribal members to live locally, is a major accomplishment. By creating jobs and businesses that fill a market niche and utilize local resources, the Clifton-Choctaw are working to break the cycle of poverty and unemployment that historically prevented them from

using their skills and interests AND make a living wage. The tribe also employs more than a third of its members growing shiitake mushrooms and baling "pine straw," which is in great demand across the South for landscaping purposes.

For more information, contact:

Alan Dorian, Heritage Resources Coordinator,
Kisatchie National Forest,
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Elizabeth Crane

Saddles & Stirrups

Ramah Navajo Saddle Manufacturing Enterprise, New Mexico

The Ramah Chapter, a subunit of the Navajo Nation, has recently developed, and implemented, a saddlemaking enterprise with funding assistance from its neighbor, the Cibola National Forest. The business, started on a small scale, is evolving into a producer of competitively priced, high-quality, custom, and general-purpose saddlery products with unique, traditional Navajo designs. The small remote community is located in the west-central mountains of New Mexico, and getting a new enterprise growing here is always a challenge. Of the total project cost, \$86,159, the Forest Service funded an economic recovery grant of \$20,000 and the chapter contributed in-kind services, tools and equipment, and a 1,092 square-foot facility.

The combined effort resulted in the training of three local apprentices in the art of building high-

quality handmade saddles, by a professional saddlemaker and an assistant. During the initial 2 months, hands-on intensive training on saddlemaking and proper use of electric handtools and other equipment, the apprentices completed six new, all-purpose western work saddles and one western pleasure-riding saddle, and rebuilt one work saddle. The well-made saddles were offered at an introductory price of \$500 for the pleasure-riding saddle, and up to \$900 for the work saddles.

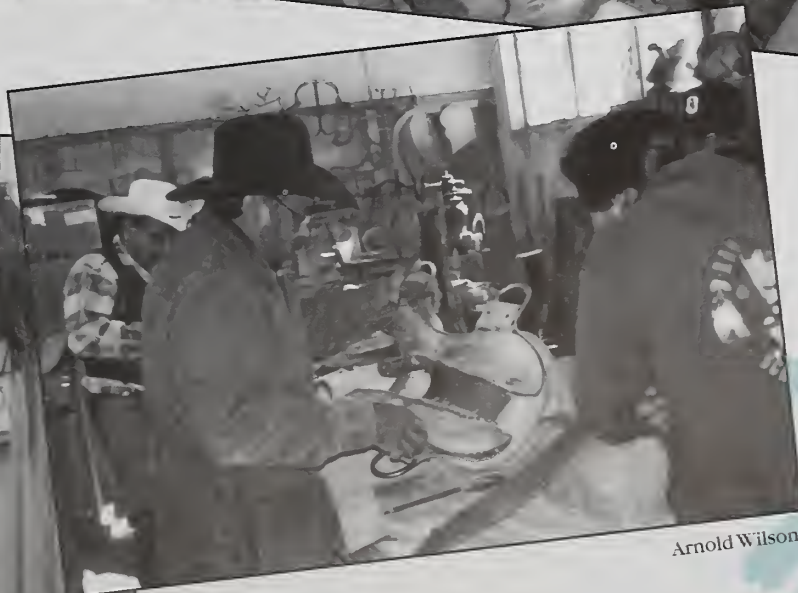
The working relationship between the Ramah Chapter and the Cibola National Forest has grown and has enabled the chapter to build its capacity for local control and decisionmaking involving economic development initiatives. Because of the success of this hands-on experience, the chapter is establishing an organization capable of planning

and managing economic and natural resources development to strengthen the economic growth and self-sufficiency in this remote community.

The chapter officials and staff gave special thanks for a job well done to Arnold Wilson, Recreation and Lands Officer, Mount Taylor Ranger District, Cibola National Forest; Steven Kluge, RCA Programs, Cibola National Forest; and to Jeanine Derby, former Forest Supervisor of the Cibola National Forest.

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Arnold Wilson



Here are some tools to assist you in your collaborative planning process. Building consensus through creative collaboration while encouraging sustainable community-based planning involves some “homework.”

These tools may help you along the way as you learn to empower your diverse community members to take viable action through collaborative partnerships. As you work together, you will be giving yourselves the

space to go from conflict to healing, discovering resolution in harmony. Amelia Earhart said, “Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace.” Be courageous, be bold, and succeed!

1. Collaborative Planning’s Key Elements

- Improve the situation
- Break down barriers
- Take the time to build trust
- Develop a common vision
- Offer positive leadership
- Know your assets (from: The Power of Collaborative Planning—Report of the National Workshop, USDA Forest Service)

2. Sustainability

- Maintain and enhance the quality of life
- Balance human needs and natural resources
- Encourage resiliency and flexibility
- Explore the relationship of sustainability and change
- Look at the long-term
- Work at multiple scales
- Respect knowledge
- Recognize and free limitations (from sustaining Forest and Communities/Collaborative Planning—Report of the National Workshop, USDA Forest Service.)

3. Choosing a Different Path: 10 Steps to Guide Your Journey

- If your community chooses to follow the path of sustainable community development, you will need to reset your compass—the order in which a community acts upon each step will depend on a variety of local factors. Communities may wish to take several steps at a time.
- Form an action team
- Share a vision of the future
- Make community learning constant
- Reach out to other communities
- Develop an action plan
- Measure your progress
- Redirect resources
- Engage the public
- Be creative
- Celebrate your successes (from: Communities By Choice, Montana Association for Community Economic Development)

4. Keys to an Effective Collaborative Process

- Clearly define participant roles and authorities
- Build trust
- Promote leadership
- Bring a collaborative attitude to the table
- Maintain participant continuity, if possible, and deal with transitions effectively when they occur
- Recognize and address participant time and resource limitations
- Address cultural differences and power imbalances
- Build accountability into the process
- Build organizational commitment
- Utilize a consensus process when possible
- Produce tangible results early in the process
- Link decisionmaking and implementation

- Establish ground rules
- Use facilitators
- Run efficient meetings
- Promote skill-building (from: The Keystone National Policy Dialogue on Ecosystem Management, USDA Forest Service)

5. Putting Collaboration to Work

Collaboration is a challenging art. It often means talking seriously with people you don’t know, agree with, or even like. It means dealing with people you may fear or those you think have power over you. To make your collaborative efforts more successful (not to mention more fun and less stressful), review the following principles. They’re guaranteed to help.

• Hear Their Concerns and Ideas Before Telling Them Yours

In important discussions, many of us tend to blurt out our own ideas. But you’re far more likely to be heard if you first listen to the ideas of others. Once they’ve said their peace, their minds are clear to hear your ideas.

• Understand Their Interests Before Describing Yours

Look for the interests, fears, and values that underlie the things they’re saying. Repeat what you think you’re hearing. Ask if your understanding is correct.

• Describe Your Interests Instead of Defending Your Position

Most of us have a good idea of how our interests can be fulfilled. That’s our position. If, instead, we talk about what we want—our problems, needs, and interests—before seeking solutions, the discussion may lead to alternative ways of fulfilling those interests.

• Join Them Before Asking Them to Join You

Look for ways in which their interests are consistent with yours. Then work with them to focus on how you can both get what you want.

• Set Aside Differences and Disagreements to Solve Mutual Problems

If you’re talking with people with whom you’ve disagreed in the past, don’t ignore those differences. Instead, clear the air by acknowledging them. Agree to disagree respect fully on certain points, but keep in mind that what’s most important is that you’re part of the same community and you’re eager to collaborate on this particular effort, regard less of past differences.

• Employ Active Listening

Acknowledging, empathizing, and clarifying are the most valuable skills that can be brought to any important communication.

• Pursue Easier Issues First

Your collaborative effort may go smoothly, but if it’s a highly charged discussion and the issues are difficult, tackle the easiest one first. That success will give you confidence and momentum to take on the more difficult issues.

Where Do I Go From Here?

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Cooperative Forestry—Here to Help

Cooperative Forestry works in partnership with State foresters and other key partners to connect Federal and State resources with more than 9.3 million private forest landowners and 45,000 rural and urban communities in the United States.

We attempt this task through four major areas of work: Economic Action (EA), Landowner Assistance (LOA), Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF), and Natural Resources Conservation Education (NRCE).

Each work area targets specific landowners, communities, or other clients. Following are brief summaries of each work area. Look on the previous page of this publication for information on how to contact our coordinators for assistance.

EA includes a set of programs and methods focused on the needs of rural communities and natural resource-based businesses in rural and urban areas. The programs help communities integrate economic, environmental, and social goals through strategic planning and direct assistance. The Forest Service's role is to increase the capability of rural communities to:

- make informed decisions regarding natural resources and sustainable development.
- diversify their economies.
- stimulate the development of competitive, environmentally responsible, forest-based enterprises.

The agency's strategy for assisting communities emphasizes the national role of catalyzing local action and bringing together people to solve their own problems.

LOA programs are administered through State forestry agencies. Through training and economic incentives, State foresters help private landowners, and stewards, meet their management objectives. Development of a Landowner Forest Stewardship Plan is the first step in obtaining cost-share assistance. Nonmonetary assistance from State and Federal sources includes help with landscape and watershed planning, soil conservation practices, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, and forest stand improvement. In addition to the specific aid they give to a landowner, State and Federal foresters can use collected information to better understand regional forest conditions.

U&CF promotes capacity building in cities and rural communities to advance the stewardship of trees, forests, and related resources in urban and suburban environments. The program provides leadership in defining and implementing a strategic vision that involves all of the various partners in the urban forestry delivery system. More than 7,000 communities have received assistance through State forestry organizations working within the U&CF framework.

One of the largest undertakings within U&CF is the Urban Resources Partnership (URP). URP is a team of agencies and organizations

from a wide range of Federal, State, and local groups that have joined together to address natural resource issues in America's most urbanized communities. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is cosponsored by two of its agencies—the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service. Projects vary in size and complexity and include inner-city cleanup efforts, neighborhood community gardens, outdoor classrooms, and wetlands restoration. There are projects occurring in major cities throughout the United States.

NRCE tries to equip people to make their own informed decisions regarding natural resources. Its programs and activities support and encourage conservation of forests and rangelands by advocating a conservation ethic, encouraging active public participation in conservation activities, and offering citizens the opportunity to care about natural resources and land stewardship. NRCE was originally created in response to suggestions made by the National Association of State Foresters. Its education programs reach several million people of all ages every year. When one person is reached—a child, an adult, a teacher, a neighbor—it is one more person who understands stewardship of the land. Each individual reached touches others, sharing the vision of collaborative stewardship.

Each of the four Cooperative Forestry work areas makes a difference. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck said, "All across the country, people are realizing that the quality of their lives and the happiness of their families are inextricably linked to the health of the land. As conservation leaders, we have an obligation to practice collaborative stewardship, to bring people together on the land, and to help them learn to live within its limits." As you venture forth to face the challenges in your community, contact us, talk with us, we're here to help.

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